Seventh plenary meeting of the 40th session of the General Conference

Friday 15 November 2019 at 10.20 a.m.

President: Mr Altay Cengizer (Turkey)

Second report of the Bureau

1.1 The President:

Good morning ladies and gentlemen, I declare open the seventh plenary meeting of the General Conference, which will be dedicated to continuation of the general policy debate. At the end of this morning’s meeting, we will have the honour of receiving Her Royal Highness Princess Marie of Denmark.

1.2 Before we start with the national statements, I wish to inform the delegates that the Bureau held its third meeting this morning. I am pleased to give you a short but heartening report of this meeting. The Bureau resumed the discussions which started on 13 November and continued on 14 November. On the date and hour of the plenary meeting, it will address items 7.3, 7.4 and 7.5. These, as you all know, are the proposed amendments to the Constitution. Members of the Bureau took the floor to express their view on the issue. On the basis of the outcome of this meeting, I am happy to announce that the Bureau recommended to the General Conference that items 7.3, 7.4 and 7.5 will be discussed in the plenary on 20 November 2019 starting at 3 p.m. May I take it that the General Conference agrees to take note of this report? It is so decided.

1.3 We will now start with our list of speakers for the day. Before I give the floor to the first speaker, I wish to remind distinguished delegates that each statement will be limited to six minutes. The first speaker on our list is His Excellency Mr Babalola Jean-Michel Hervé Abimbola, Minister of Tourism, Culture and Art of Benin.

General policy debate (continued)

2.1 Bénin:


2.2 Mesdames et messieurs, à l’instar de la plupart des pays, le Bénin est attaché à l’ODD 4 des objectifs de développement durable. Cela transparaît dans notre récent plan sectoriel post 2015 de l’éducation, dans le processus duquel l’UNESCO a été d’un grand soutien. Toutefois, la perspective de la mise en œuvre de ce plan, dans la perspective, disais-je, de la perspective de ce plan, il nous plaît de rappeler, à notre sens, le rôle et la mission de l’UNESCO. Le Bénin estime en effet qu’au-delà de l’appui à la formulation et à l’évaluation des politiques et plans sectoriels, l’UNESCO doit viser l’accompagnement des pays pour la mise en place des politiques et plans sous-régionaux qui ciblent des défis communs à relever par des ensembles plus ou moins homogènes.

2.3 Mesdames et messieurs, parmi les innovations significatives dans l’enseignement primaire au Bénin, il convient de mentionner l’initiation à la langue anglaise pour davantage d’ouverture sur le monde, l’introduction des classes culturelles et sportives en application des recommandations du Plan d’action de Kazan, et surtout la généralisation de l’alimentation scolaire avec comme effet immédiat une augmentation des taux de fréquentation et de maintien. La reconsidération de la situation des enseignants a permis, en dehors de l’encadrement du droit de grève, de rendre effectif le statut particulier des enseignants, d’engager, grâce à l’UNESCO, l’élaboration de la politique nationale enseignante. Toutes choses qui ont concouru à accroître et améliorer la gestion du temps d’apprentissage, avec comme conséquence une année scolaire normalisée et des taux de réussite aux examens nationaux élevés dans tous les ordres d’enseignement.

2.4 Dans l’enseignement secondaire, technique et la formation professionnelle, les réformes visant le renforcement des capacités et le développement de compétences pour une professionnalisation plus poussée. Je m’en voudrais de ne pas saluer ici le soutien des donateurs et de l’UNESCO au Bénin à ce propos. Ce soutien s’est encore matérialisé il y a peu, notamment par la contribution à la Table ronde technique internationale à Cotonou pour la validation de la stratégie nationale pour l’enseignement, et la formation technique et professionnelle.


2.6 Les initiatives de l’UNESCO pour l’accompagnement des États membres dans la révolution numérique et de l’intelligence artificielle sont à saluer. L’Afrique y est grandement attendue et les aspirations de notre jeunesse ne seront pas absentes à ce rendez-vous. C’est pourquoi le Bénin s’est engagé dans un vaste programme de classes numériques, aussi bien dans l’enseignement primaire que secondaire, et dans l’organisation prochaine de la deuxième édition de « Benin Workshop in Artificial Intelligence (BWAI) » étendue aux pays de la sous-région ouest-africaine. Nous nous félicitons enfin du succès et du rayonnement des chaires UNESCO au Bénin, tout en réitérant du haut de cette tribune notre demande de soutien pour la création d’une chaire UNESCO sur la thématique « Patrimoine culturel et développement des peuples africains ». 
2.7 Mesdames et messieurs, la place de la culture dans l’agenda du Gouvernement du Bénin reste remarquable. Elle se traduit, non seulement à travers l’adhésion et le respect de toutes les conventions visant la sauvegarde, la protection et la promotion du patrimoine culturel, mais également le plaidoyer pour le retour des biens culturels à leurs pays d’origine sans en exclure la circulation. Je vous prie de recevoir dans ce cadre les remerciements du Président de la République, le Président Patrice Talon, pour l’accueil réservé à cette idée qu’il a lancée depuis 2016 et qui a été reprise à la Conférence de l’UNESCO sur les biens culturels le 1er juin 2018, lors de laquelle la prestigieuse Organisation a bien voulu l’associer en qualité de Co-président.

2.8 L’organisation en août 2019 du 25e anniversaire du projet « La Route de l’esclave » témoigne de notre ferme engagement à contribuer aux objectifs de l’UNESCO dans un domaine aussi vital pour l’identité que pour le dialogue interculturel et le développement des peuples. C’est le lieu d’en appeler à un soutien franc de tous les États membres au Projet de résolution présenté par le Bénin avec l’appui d’autres délégations pour explorer les nouvelles perspectives pour le projet « La Route de l’esclave ».

2.9 Mesdames et messieurs, le Bénin est candidat au Conseil exécutif de l’UNESCO pour la période 2019-2023. En effet, dans un contexte global menacé par toutes sortes de risques, nous avons pour vision de contribuer au renforcement du multilatéralisme aux côtés d’autres États membres pour atteindre les idéaux de l’UNESCO, dans un monde de paix et de compréhension mutuelle. Je voudrais faire court, pour dire et pour finir, ce sont les bases qui fondent l’engagement du Bénin à accompagner les réformes en cours dans le cadre de la transformation stratégique et de la gouvernance de l’UNESCO. À cet égard, le Bénin est favorable à toutes les mesures de notre auguste assemblée pour en augmenter le sentiment d’appartenance. Nous appuyons aussi les mesures visant à réduire l’accumulation des arriérés de contributions, car l’enjeu est de donner à l’ Institution les moyens de ses nobles ambitions.

2.10 Je ne saurais terminer mon propos sans vous dire à nouveau les félicitations de la République du Bénin, tout en reîtrant le soutien de son Chef le Président Talon au Président de la Conférence pour la conduite de nos travaux, à vous, Madame Audrey Azoulay, et à vos équipes, pour les réformes décidées et en chantier et qui visent une meilleure gouvernance et l’efficacité de notre Organisation commune. Vive la coopération multilatérale, Je vous remercie.

3. The President:

Merci votre Excellence. The next speaker is His Excellency Mr Lloyd Jeffrey, Minister of Education of the Bahamas.

4.1 Bahamas:
Mr President of the General Conference, Madam Director-General, your Excellencies, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, I am honoured and privileged to address this 40th session of this General Conference as the Minister of Education of the Commonwealth of the Bahamas. I bring greetings on behalf of both His Excellency the Honourable Cornelius A. Smith, Governor General; the Most Honourable Dr Hubert A. Minnis, Prime Minister, and the people of our country.

4.2 Mr President, last week the Bahamas, with the support of the UNESCO Caribbean office, successfully hosted a one-day workshop, with member countries from Latin America and the Caribbean, on establishing linkages and entry points for global citizenship education. The collaboration was important, not only because it allowed us to view and commit to adopting best practices globally, to see that they may be incorporated into our own instructional agenda, but also to formulate policies and an educational framework for our curriculum.

4.3 Mr President, two years ago when I addressed this body, I informed esteemed delegates that the Bahamas fully supports the strategic objectives of the United Nations, particularly Sustainable Development Goal 4. That support has now become even more critical for the Bahamas in light of a recent visit to our country by a most unwelcomed guest. In the early morning hours of 2 September eight weeks ago, the Bahamas suffered a natural disaster of unprecedented magnitude – Hurricane Dorian, packing sustained winds of 180 mph and gusts reaching 250 mph, with sea surges reaching 27 feet, decimated two of our most populated islands, Grand Bahama and Abaco, and wrecking at the same time the second and third economic centres of our country. As a consequence, 70,000 Bahamian citizens and residents, approximately 20% of our population, were displaced, with many left homeless and hundreds more missing and presumed dead. Hurricane Dorian inflicted a major negative handprint on our country. In the education sector, 10,000 students, and over 1,000 teachers, administrators and support staff were affected, and had to be relocated and reassigned to schools in the capital and other islands. Hurricane Dorian additionally damaged or destroyed dozens of educational buildings, facilities and properties, including 20 public schools in Grand Bahama, and 14 private and public schools in Abaco. While we were able to reopen most of our Grand Bahama schools after several weeks of closure, the majority of schools in Abaco still remain closed.

4.4 Mr President, the Bahamas appreciates the prominence UNESCO gives to climate change and its efforts to mitigate the negative effects of increasingly stronger storms that wreak devastating impacts on small island States like the Bahamas. Small island developing States (SIDS) while making a negligible effect on the spectre of climate change, nevertheless suffers a vastly disproportionate casualty as a result thereof. Hurricane Dorian impressed upon my Ministry the urgent need to address challenges which are peculiar to the Bahamas, a country of scattered islands. As a consequence of Hurricane Dorian, the graphic peculiarities and opportunities of our archipelagic nation were clearly exposed. For instance, with a total population of 75,000 students stretching over 25 populated islands and 14 school districts, and with a perennial teacher shortage, especially in vital STEM subjects, the Bahamas was compelled to accelerate its already implemented three-year $17 million digitization initiative, which started in September 2018.

4.5 One of the dominant benefits of digitization has been distance learning, to provide for the teacher gap and ensure equal access to quality education for all Bahamian citizens. Because of the displacement of thousands of students due to Hurricane Dorian, we had to mobilize a virtual school, which currently provides distance learning instruction to 12 islands and more than 300 students, with many more being added each week.
6.1 Mr President, the Bahamas is committed to ensuring that when our students leave high school that they are equipped with multiple literacies that will enable them to make meaningful contributions as nation builders who are globally competitive. We are adamant that we achieve the Sustainable Development Goals which ensures that all girls and boys have access to quality early education development, pre-primary education, enhance ongoing teacher training and reform our curriculum. As a result, to date the number of students in Government pre-schools has increased significantly through the conversion of vacant classrooms, and partnerships with approved privately-owned pre-schools to accept students who cannot be accommodated in the Government sector. We believe this will help us to achieve not only equitable, but also inclusive education for all, thus fulfilling another major Sustainable Development Goal. Mr President, Bahamas pledges its support and commitment to the ideals and work of UNESCO and please be assured of our continued collaboration. Thank you.

5. The President:
Thank you your Excellency. Now I invite Her Excellency Ms Olivia Grange, Minister of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport of Jamaica.

6.1 Jamaica:
Mr President of the General Conference, Mr Chairperson the Executive Board, Madam Director-General, last year on November 29 reggae music of Jamaica was inscribed on UNESCO’s Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity and we all celebrated by singing Bob Marley’s “One Love”. Previously, Kingston, our capital city, was declared a Creative City of Music by UNESCO, and our Blue and John Crow Mountains were designated as a world heritage site. Our country understands the value of UNESCO in recognizing and protecting cultural heritage. These achievements are also in keeping with Jamaica’s recognition of its creative economy. For this reason, Jamaica is taking concrete steps to establish a national cultural and creative industries council “Jamaica Creative” to realize the objectives of the 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.

6.2 In the field of education, we are moving solidly to support the on Global Convention on the Recognition of Higher Education Qualifications. Jamaica is committed to the promotion of equity, and has prioritized TVET and STEM integration and are making important strides in reducing gender gaps in educational institutions and transforming the early childhood sector.

6.3 As we look to the future, the views of our young people are important, and Jamaica is pleased to have two vibrant representatives in attendance at the UNESCO Youth Forum. In relation to science, we have embraced the urgency which must be attached to the pursuit of Open Science, of women and girls in science, and in managing the digital transformation. In February 2020, Jamaica and the UNESCO Caribbean Cluster Office will be hosting a conference on artificial intelligence for the Caribbean, and will also explore its use to promote integrity in sport which we call “physical culture”. We are convinced of the significant contribution which UNESCO can make to setting global standards in this area.

6.4 We also attach great significance to media and information literacy, as responsible media and technology play a vital role in promoting democratic values and fostering inclusive societies. Digital literacy is critical in preparing our people for the far-reaching disruptions, displacement and opportunities of the fourth industrial revolution. This is particularly relevant to SIDS, given our low levels of GDP and labour-intensive economies, which are most susceptible to the negative consequences of automation in the short to medium term. UNESCO’s approval of the declaration of October 24 to 31 as Global Media and Information Literacy Week would help to give these important issues the global attention which they need and deserve. We look forward to the support of Member States.

6.5 Mr President, today Jamaica re-affirms its commitment to pursue the Organization’s goals and aspirations at the country level. Today, we are further challenging UNESCO to intensify the mutually reinforcing relationship with its membership, given the unique role assigned to it as a force for good in national and global development. UNESCO is an organization which is best placed to demonstrate multilateralism at work. Jamaica joins other small island developing States in continuing to press for UNESCO to advance a global priority plan towards SIDS imperatives, of which climate change is a critical component.

6.6 My delegation acknowledges the many successes of the UNESCO family, including the regional offices and National Commissions. We commend the Director-General for her vision and for the work under way in the implementation of the strategic transformation to strengthen UNESCO’s capacity and effectiveness. While this is a work in progress, we declare that its success will only be assured when all Member States are able to see themselves in the outcomes and impact. Madam Director-General, Mr President, colleagues, I make this presentation and leave with you with the words of Bob Marley – “one love, one heart, one destiny”. I thank you.

7. The President:
Thank you your Excellency. I now invite His Excellency Mr Saaid Amzazi, Minister of National Education, Professional Training, Higher Education and Scientific Research of Morocco.
in building a culture of peace and mutual understanding without prior investment in education, This is a task and a value
that we will pursue with determination and resolve.

10.1 For decades, we have played an active role and worked together with friends, partners and like-minded countries
to emphasize that Albania, as a strong promoter of multilateralism in general remains a robust supporter of this
Organization too.

10.2 We strongly support the process of strategic transformation that UNESCO is currently undergoing. This is crucial in making the
Organization more visible, efficient and stronger. On this basis, we also appreciate the consensus that was reached on
budget as a crucial step in enabling this Organization in carrying out its mandate. Unfortunately, the principle of
multilateralism is being questioned exactly at the time when it is needed most. It is just wrong, and this trend should be
reversed. A number of concerning issues that we face today – ranging from climate change up to increasing social
inequalities and gross violation of human rights – cannot be properly tackled without international collaboration.

10.3 Albania is located in a region that was not only subjugated to communist dictatorship but also underwent
terrible wars and conflicts. We are working hard to help the entire region overcome this very painful legacy and build up a
different and better future for all. We are firmly convinced that cross-cultural communication is essential to
peace, understanding and cooperation.

9. The President:

Merci votre Excellence. I now invite His Excellency Mr Gent Cakaj, Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs of
Albania

10.1 Albania:

Mr President of the General Conference, Madam Director-General, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, it is
absolutely a great honour to take part in the 40th session of UNESCO’s General Conference. To begin with, I would like
to emphasize that Albania, as a strong promoter of multilateralism in general remains a robust supporter of this
Organization too.

10.2 For decades, we have played an active role and worked together with friends, partners and like-minded countries
to uphold our shared values worldwide. We are convinced that a stronger UNESCO means better education for all, larger
reversals of the world’s history, greater human rights and respect for mutual respect in general. For this reason, we strongly
support the process of strategic transformation that UNESCO is currently undergoing. This is crucial in making the
Organization more visible, efficient and stronger. On this basis, we also appreciate the consensus that was reached on
budget as a crucial step in enabling this Organization in carrying out its mandate. Unfortunately, the principle of
multilateralism is being questioned exactly at the time when it is needed most. It is just wrong, and this trend should be
reversed. A number of concerning issues that we face today – ranging from climate change up to increasing social
inequalities and gross violation of human rights – cannot be properly tackled without international collaboration.

10.3 It is with this conviction that Albania is preparing to take over the Chairmanship of the Organization for Security
and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) next year. We stand ready to work also very closely with UNESCO with the aim to
protect human rights, promote mutual understanding and support education as a tool of social transformation and also as
an instrument for eradicating social exclusion and extremism.

10.4 There is a wide range of issues that I would like to discuss today, but given time restrictions I will solely focus on
three main points that stand at the core of our action at UNESCO. First, we all agree – I hope – that we will not be successful
in building a culture of peace and mutual understanding without prior investment in education, This is a task and a value
that we will pursue with determination and resolve.

10.5 Second, Albania is preparing to take over the Chairmanship of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) next year. We stand ready to work also very closely with UNESCO with the aim to
protect human rights, promote mutual understanding and support education as a tool of social transformation and also as
an instrument for eradicating social exclusion and extremism.
just as we believe that different historic worldviews are rather enriching to our social lives. In July this year, the World Heritage Committee inscribed the Albanian part of the Lake Ohrid Region on the World Heritage List. This decision is more than just a contribution to protecting such a rich and unique transboundary area. In reality, it offers a very tangible example in cross-border cooperation between two neighbouring countries, Albania and North Macedonia. This is an example of how cultural and natural heritage can bring countries together, and not just tear nations apart. In this vein, Albania has substantially strengthened the legal framework for protecting minority rights. As an organization, we have no alternative but to put our most systematic and substantial efforts in the service of such a noble cause.

10.6 Third, inclusiveness and universality are core values of UNESCO. Therefore, we cannot ignore any further independent countries with tremendous potential for this Organization as a whole. Unfortunately, there is still one country in Europe that remains excluded: Europe’s youngest republic, the Republic of Kosovo. As we all know, the Republic of Kosovo applied to join UNESCO in 2015, but very regretfully Kosovo faced Serbia’s intentional misleading campaign and the opposition of some other Member States too. Rejecting Kosovo’s membership was a historic mistake – for our meeting would have been more rich and by far better off if the Republic of Kosovo could have been with us today. For I can claim without any doubt that the Republic of Kosovo is an example in promoting minority rights, and cultural heritage for all minorities, based on the most distinguished and advanced international standards. This is not just our opinion – this is well documented fact. We have heard several times a number of concerns regarding the preservation of cultural heritage in the Republic of Kosovo. Just two days ago, in this very place, Mr Aleksandar Vučić, the President of Serbia, continued with such misleading propaganda. It is unfortunate but hardly a surprise. It is absolutely clear and so obvious that such concerns would have been better dealt with if Kosovo could have been part of this Organization. So, once more, we call on Member States of UNESCO to have an inclusive approach and support Kosovo’s membership path in our joint family.

10.7 Mr President, since we are on the eve of International Day of Tolerance, let me conclude by highlighting something that we must never forget: tolerance and mutual understanding are essential in making the world a better place to live. This principle stands at the very heart of UNESCO: It is a principle worth working hard for. This is why excluding the Republic of Kosovo goes against such immensely valuable purpose. Thank you.

11. The President:
Thank you, your Excellency. I now invite Her Excellency Dr. Aishath Ali, Minister of Education of Maldives.

12.1 Maldives:
Mr President of the General Conference, Madam Director-General, Excellencies, distinguished delegates, good morning. It is my pleasure and privilege to join others in congratulating you, Mr President, on your election to this very important post. I sincerely wish you every success in your new role. Let me also take this opportunity to express our deep appreciation to the Director-General for her commitment to the goals of the Organization and her consistent support to the Member States.

12.2 Mr President, Maldives had already achieved five out of the eight Millennium Development Goals. We are committed to working with the rest of the world and the international partners to take the bold and urgent steps needed to build on the MDGs achieved. We stand firmly resolved to fulfill the rest. Our Government has given utmost priority to strengthen the education sector. This priority is reflected in the education’s sector’s share of the national budget.

12.3 In the area of education, Maldives has made important strides, especially in primary and lower secondary levels of schooling. Two years of early childhood education have been made compulsory and available for free in all inhabited islands. Universal primary education was achieved in 2002 with no significant gender parity. The transition rate from primary to secondary is near universal. Maldives has achieved and sustained an adult literacy rate of over 98% since the late 1990s. The Maldives is one of the few nations to provide 14 years of free schooling for all students. In addition, in 2019, bachelor’s degree tuition fees have been made free for all eligible students in the country. Despite these positive indicators and efforts, the education sector faces serious challenges. The net enrolment rate is low, although enrolment at the higher secondary level has increased over time. There are concerns about the quality of school education. The recruitment of bright students to teacher education programmes and the retention of quality teachers remain as major issues. The administration and practices of quality assurance bodies for all levels of education lack rigour and thoroughness. A new school curriculum introduced a few years ago aims to provide an all-encompassing, holistic student experience. Though this is a step in the right direction, much work still needs to be done. Concepts of anti-bullying, tolerance, democratic values and gender equality need to be woven into the fabric of every day school experiences. Though schools have become more inclusive spaces, there are significant variations across the country. School achievement still varies with the geographical location of the school.

12.4 Mr President, to address the challenges I just mentioned, the Government has prioritized some key policy areas. These include ensuring equitable access and outcomes from K-12, eliminating learning gaps, and ensuring more effective schooling through better implementation of the school curriculum. Additionally, devolving decision making to schools expanding the vocationalization of normal schools are thrust areas of Government policies. The Government aims to raise the social status of teachers by raising remuneration and expanding the opportunities for professional development. In the area of higher education, the Government aims to further strengthen access by broadening the student loan scheme, expanding the vocationalization of normal schools are thrust areas of Government policies. The Government aims to raise the social status of teachers by raising remuneration and expanding the opportunities for professional development. In the area of higher education, the Government aims to further strengthen access by broadening the student loan scheme.

12.5 Mr President, considering the heavy reliance of the Maldivian economy on tourism and Maldives’ pristine environment, meeting the environment goals is especially critical to the country. The Government remains committed to ensure environmental protection and preservation by acting as a custodian of these resources for the benefit of the future generations. The Government is increasing the numbers of protected natural areas, and improving their management and governance. The UNESCO biosphere reserve presents a unique model to anchor this work.

12.6 Mr President, all of us are tied by invisible bonds to our heritage and culture. Protecting and safeguarding our culture and heritage is a Government priority. A new ministry has been established under the new administration to promote
the arts and to preserve the tangible and intangible cultural heritage. Government strategies are being formulated to ensure the preservation and management of heritage buildings and sites. In this regard, Maldives is currently working on inscribing the ancient Coral Stone Mosques of the Maldives on the World Heritage List. The Government also aims to facilitate and encourage creativity and originality among local artists and other cultural practitioners, in ways to promote and preserve national identity. This sector is in dire need of expert knowledge and resources because it had received little attention in the past.

12.7 Mr President, with 36.5% of the Maldivian population under the age of 35, the Government has a unique opportunity to make transformational decisions which will enable the country to reap the best from its young demographic. I acknowledge UNESCO’s commitment to youth development supporting their participation in the national development, which will be quite crucial for a small island developing State like the Maldives.

12.8 Mr President, we are currently living at a time of great uncertainty – at the crossroads between possibly a post-globalization era and a period when long-cherished ideals are being eroded by a new yet unnamed world order. Despite the uncertainty of the external environment, I am confident that UNESCO will remain at the forefront in promoting its ideals for humankind and acting as a moral and ethical conscience for all peoples of all the nations and races. Thank you.

13. The President:
Thank you your Excellency. I am inviting His Excellency Mr Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank, Minister of Human Resource Development of India, who will give his speech in Hindi.

14.1 India:
(address delivered in Hindi; English text provided by the Delegation):

14.2 Age-old "Ajar Amar" Indian culture considers the whole world as family. Ayam nijah paro veti ganana laghu chettasam. Udaricharitanan Tu Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam which means the whole world is a family. Spreading the great idea of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam all over the world, India has prayed for the welfare of the entire humanity by accepting the hypothesis of “Harve Bhavantu Sukhinah, Survey Santu Niramaya”. No one should be in trouble in the world. By contemplating the idea of integral human debate, we have pledged to reach out to the last person in the society.

14.3 The Honourable Prime Minister of India, Mr Narendra Modi, spoke at the 74th conference of the United Nations General Assembly about the motto of India as "Collective efforts, for growth of all, with everyone’s trust". This session of UNESCO has another significance as it is being held at a time when the whole world is celebrating the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi. His message on truth and nonviolence is even more important and relevant today.

14.4 Through education, we are trying to pursue and flourish the spirit of universal brotherhood, social harmony, cordiality, human values and love to each and every citizen of India. Being the third largest education system in the world, it is important for India to be committed in building a bright future for more than 33 crore students. There are more than 1,000 universities and more than 45,000 degree colleges in India and it is the country with the largest number of young people.

14.5 India has been playing a positive and constructive role to carry forward UNESCO’s mission and realize our common objectives. We will continue to support UNESCO in its effort to pursue its core mandate of building peace through international cooperation in education, science, environment and culture. Our philosophy, our thinking and our feeling everything remains focused for the welfare of humanity, Asato Ma Sadgamya Tamaso Ma Jyotirgamya means to lead all creatures from the false to the truth and from the darkness to the light. We appreciate the efforts of UNESCO to ensure here that every child and citizen receives quality education. We appreciate the efforts of UNESCO to ensure that every child and citizen receives quality education. According to our mandate, we were able to reach every child across India by implementing the Right to Education Act 2009.

14.6 India has one of the oldest centres of learning in the world, the Nalanda University. Nalanda, Vikramashila, Vallabhi University have been the centre of attraction for students and scholars from different parts of the world. Over a span of 33 years, we have made radical changes in the educational sector of the country. Through our new education policy, we are committed to achieving the target fixed in the areas of quality, employability, creativity, inclusiveness, human values, science and innovation, skills, social interest, practical research, and environmental education. India is highly determined to make higher education qualitative and affordable.

14.7 Mr President, through the “SWAYAM” online portal, we are trying to provide free online education, not only for Indian students but also to foreign students. In India already 12.3 million students are taking online education under the SWAYAM portal. We are also providing free online education through E-Vidya Bharati and Arogya bharati, and through the Swayam Prabha, DTH Channel. We have an agreement with African countries to provide the same free of charge. We have provided 1,000 scholarships to all the ASEAN countries for research in our excellent Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs). Other schemes such as Imprint, SPARC, Stride, NIRF Ranking, Impress and GIAN enable students from other countries to avail of education in India. More than 100 excellent educational institutes of India are available as attractive destinations for students all over the world under the “Study in India” programme.

14.8 We understand the importance of training programmes for teachers. We have therefore started the world largest teacher training programme “Nishtha” under which we will train more than 4.2 million teachers. In the same manner, more than 1 million higher education teachers will be trained under the ARPIT programme.
14.9 We also appreciate and support the continuous efforts of UNESCO for the purpose of promoting cultural heritage and preservation of world heritage sites. I take this opportunity to thank UNESCO for including the city of Jaipur on the World Heritage List. I would also like to thank UNESCO for including Kumbh Mela, the world’s largest human gathering, in the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. Likewise, I also welcome the selection of Mumbai and Hyderabad as part of the Creative Cities network. We are in favour of strengthening the UNESCO 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transport of Ownership of Cultural Property.

14.10 This year UNESCO has declared the International Year of Indigenous Languages. In this connection, I would like to convey that there are more than 2,000 indigenous languages. India is committed to preserving and strengthening Hindi, Sanskrit and all other Indian languages and their scripts. India is also committed to achieving UNESCO’s Sustainable Development Goals with the help of science and technology. In this context, the Honourable Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi has unveiled “India Technology Vision 2035” at the 103rd Indian Science Congress, which focuses on 12 subjects. New schemes such as clean energy, research, solar energy and water technology have been introduced so that our environment is protected. India has led the International Solar Alliance to reduce the growing climate imbalance in the field of environment in India.

14.11 The challenge before the world of climate change is to face it together. Climate change is a major challenge for us. India wants to take this kind of initiative with other countries in the fields of education, culture, science, technology, water and sanitation. I request the entire world that together we all meet the Sustainable Development Goals of the UNESCO environment sector. Mata Bhumi Putroo aham Prithavya – we consider the entire Earth as mother. We are always determined to protect and preserve her.

14.12 Mr President, on this occasion, I would like to reiterate that India is in favour of integrating UNESCO into the broader framework of United Nations reform. We believe that the amendment to the UNESCO Constitution will have far-reaching effects and will encourage mutual cooperation. In the end I would like to say Om sahnawwatu Sah nau Bhunktu Sah Viryam karawwahai Tejasvi navdhimtsu ma vidwishavhai Om shanti. That means: “We grew up together, share, eat, nourish together. Oh God! May you protect both of us (Guru-disciple). Nurture both of us. Provide strength to both of us. May our knowledge be brilliant and we should not envy anyone. I convey the best wishes on behalf of my country to everyone. Thank you.

15. The President:
Thank you your Excellency. I invite His Excellency Mr Armando Lampe, Minister of Education, Science and Sustainable Development of Aruba.

16.1 Aruba:
Mr President of the General Conference, Mr Chairperson of the Executive Board, Madam Director-General, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of the Government of Aruba, I thank UNESCO for this distinguished platform, with Aruba having the status of Associate Member.

16.2 As a small non-independent country in the Caribbean, we have recently taken the decision to belong to the UNESCO Cluster Office of the Caribbean in Kingston, Jamaica, where there are other non-independent, or more contemporary independent small island States. Since we returned to the Kingston Office we are very open to collaborating with other countries of the Caribbean and we still maintain good contacts with the UNESCO Office in Havana.

16.3 Mr President, together with Curacao, side by side, we will ask UNESCO for more participatory input of the Associate Members. Together we are in the process of ratifying the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Underwater Cultural Heritage. We have also ratified the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, and together with Curacao and Bonaire where we speak Papiamento, we are trying to put cultural expressions of the Creole language of Papiamento on the UNESCO List of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

16.4 Mr President, following the UNESCO principle of mother-tongue based education, Aruba has decided to give a prominent status to our local language Papiamento in the educational system. From August 2019, our children will learn to read and write in their mother tongue. In a world where Creole languages are disappearing or being discriminated against, we are giving our mother tongue a prominent status in line with UNESCO’s principles. We call this school “SAM”, the Scol Arubano Multilingual school, where Papiamento, Dutch, English and Spanish are present, just as in our multilingual society.

16.5 Mr President, we have issued this year “PEN 2030”, our national strategic 10-year educational plan entitled “The Student in a Digital World”, which is aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals of UNESCO. As Minister of Education, Science and Sustainable Development, my Ministry believes that education cannot be separated from sustainable development. Education and SDG’s have to go hand-in-hand. Education has to serve the goal of sustainable development.

16.6 Mr President, we have to go the extra mile on this matter. We have also issued the “VEC 2050”, the Circular Economy Vision for 2050. In our view, another name for sustainable development nowadays is circular economy. Development based on the logic of growth cannot be sustainable. We have to replace our system based on consumerism and throw away products with a new system based on a new lifestyle, one that is more simple following the idea of reduce, reuse and recycle. I see that UNESCO has given a good example here using recyclable paper and products and reducing plastic. Congratulations UNESCO – you walk the walk.

16.7 Mr President, we have to educate our future generations to save our planet – education for sustainable development, there is no other way. We say no man is an island. We have to educate all so that all can take care of this unique planet in the universe where life is possible. For us, coming from a small island in the Caribbean Sea, the first victims facing a possible doomsday scenario of disappearance due to climate change, we urge UNESCO to please put the
challenge of SIDS as a global priority. In other words, leave no one behind. Please leave no island behind. Masha danki. Many thanks. Merci beaucoup.

17. **The President:***
   Thank you, your Excellency. I now invite His Excellency Dr Natalio Wheatley, Minister of Education, Culture, Youth Affairs, Fisheries and Agriculture of British Virgin Islands.

18.1 **British Virgin Islands:**
   Mr President of the General Conference, Madam Director-General, Mr Chairperson of the Executive Board, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, I bring kind greetings from the Government and the people of the British Virgin Islands. Mr President, I should like to take this opportunity to congratulate you on your election as President of the 40th session of the General Conference. I wish you continued success as you assume your role with honour and dignity. It is an honour to be here today to reaffirm the British Virgin Islands’ commitment to building the defences of peace in the minds of men, women, and children, in keeping with UNESCO’s ideals of attaining the highest standards in education, science, culture, communication and information.

18.2 My dear colleagues, allow me to share with you some of the developments in education in the British Virgin Islands. As you are all aware two years ago, our islands were severely damaged when, within 14 days, we were visited by two devastating hurricanes – Irma and Maria. These hurricanes shook the very fabric and physical infrastructure of our education system, and the challenge to rebuild and repair was monumental. Students were displaced, the school day shrunk to half, and the effect was felt throughout the territory. Mr President, I am pleased to report that we are well on the way to remedying that situation, and the Government and people of the British Virgin Islands are deeply grateful for the assistance which has been provided by UNESCO. We are rebuilding schools, one at a time.

18.3 Mr President, like many States, we have achieved universal primary, secondary and tertiary education and, in so doing, we have given attention to early childhood education, special education and technical and vocational education. We have successfully embarked on teacher training programmes and we aim to have teachers qualified with bachelors’ degrees in education. For our teaching staff we continue to facilitate professional development, and for our students, our quest is to implement programmes to ensure that their reading skills reach an exceptional level. In these pursuits, we will welcome UNESCO’s expertise, and specialists to assist with further teacher training which is paramount for optimal achievement. Equipping our teachers with the tools and expertise will ensure that our students continue to excel. Given our quest for excellence, we are now including French in the curriculum as another foreign language with the expectation that our students will be better prepared to participate and benefit from the expanding tourism industry.

18.4 Mr President, our Government is dedicated to building a territory where all its citizens are provided with opportunities to reach their full potential. Access to quality education is a high priority area and the impetus by which we will promote equality and opportunity for our people, so that they can actively participate and contribute to the sustainable development of our territory. I would also like to thank UNESCO’s efforts in guiding the Education 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, and in particular SDG 4. Just last week, UNESCO in collaboration with the Asia Pacific Centre of Education for International Understanding, was gracious enough to fund a Global Citizenship Education Workshop in the British Virgin Islands, where stakeholders were fueled with innovative concepts that will help in continuing to propel the initiative of ensuring “that all learners are provided with the knowledge and skills to promote sustainable development.”

18.5 Mr President, since the UNESCO Institute for Statistics produces the most comprehensive and trusted global education database, and capacity development is a crosscutting priority, we will continue to seek UNESCO’s support in data collection, analysis and distribution of results. We recognize this as the first step toward understanding and addressing the challenges which we all face.

18.6 As a small island developing State (SIDS), the British Virgin Islands continues to share some of the same challenges to sustainable development as our counterparts do. Our unique and particular vulnerabilities include climate change. The damage done to the British Virgin Islands in recent times as a result of unprecedented climate impacts does not just erode the Caribbean way of life – it also derails Caribbean development. The result of the devastating category 5 hurricanes experienced in 2017 has proven that Caribbean SIDS are among the States that are most vulnerable to climate change. Therefore, a change in attitude and approach to this issue and its effects on SIDS must be demonstrated. We thank UNESCO for your continued support and for the initiatives that were presented in the SAMOA Pathway, even as we remind you that our challenges are increasing. We welcome any assistance UNESCO can offer for revitalizing global partnerships for sustainable development. We welcome and support Sustainable Development Goal 17.

18.7 Mr President, in concluding I wish to reiterate that the territory of the British Virgin Islands continues to appreciate the benefits of membership and association with UNESCO. We therefore pledge our commitment to and advocacy for UNESCO and its ideals. I thank you.

19. **The President:**
   Thank you, your Excellency. The next speaker is His Excellency Professor D. Ansu Sonii, Minister of Education of Liberia.

20.1 **Liberia:**
   Mr President of the General Conference, Mr Chairperson of the Executive Board, Madam Director-General of UNESCO, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, I bring you greetings from His Excellency Dr George Weah, President of the Republic of Liberia and the People of Liberia, and on their behalf congratulate the President of the 40th session of the General Conference of UNESCO, reaffirming Liberia’s commitment to the ideals and principles of this institution.
20.2 Mr President, Liberia as a founding member of UNESCO and the United Nations, has been steadily progressing on its democratic institutions and values since the civil conflict ended nearly 16 years ago. Liberia continues to commit to constructive dialogue, and promoting peace for the general good of its people and the world. "The Pro Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development", a five-year national development plan of the Republic of Liberia takes cognizance of the importance of human development as a prerequisite for national development. To guarantee an accelerated rate for such initiative, the President of Liberia, has placed education at the top of its life-changing priority, second only to road connectivity, which to all intents and purposes supports efficiency in the delivery of all social services needful of the population, including health and education. Roads are a major public sector investment priority, which are essential for the efficient delivery of education, health and other social services.

20.3 Mr President, Liberia commits to education and other youth development initiatives, even more so since the hosting of a national summit on this theme at the inception of the Government in 2018. The principal outcome of the summit was a global call for significant investment in education. Combined with the outcomes of the joint education sector review in 2018, the national summit, influenced by global thinking on education, proposes a shift from knowledge-based to STI, STEM and other forms of competence-driven and character-development education. This shift imposes the need for rebuilding underdeveloped facilities, and re-fixing the curriculum responsible for such new direction. We confirm that this Government has the political will and has taken significant steps to respond to these needs.

20.4 The population of Liberia is largely youthful, with nearly two-thirds of its 4.5 million people under the age of 35. We must cater for these young people, to sustain the peace and guarantee the future of the nation, failing which, security becomes a matter of national and continental concern. In that regard, the Government of Liberia is grateful for the interventions of major development partners, UNESCO included, all of whom are engaged with the country in varying ways. While enough is never enough for nations experiencing excessive needs, the results of these interventions goes towards addressing the concerns of our youth regarding education and jobs, in preparation for a future that is filled with so many uncertainties, especially the unpredictable consequences of global warming, with a more devastating impact for developing countries.

20.5 Mr President, Liberia acknowledges UNESCO’s enthusiasm for meeting the 2030 SDG targets, especially SDG 4. The Liberian Government expresses gratitude for all interventions in this regard, and would like to particularly highlight the UNESCO-China initiative to introduce ICT in teacher’s education.

20.6 Mr President, in terms of culture, the government of Liberia supports the stance of UNESCO to protect the rights of minorities and to protect the cultural heritage of Member States. In that regard, Liberia has declared ecological tourism as part of its economic development focus. Over the years, Liberia has catalogued a tentative list of world heritage, and has come to this General Conference to appeal for support in capacity building and training in the effective management thereof. Like many similar countries, Liberia has a unique history which has not been told on the world platform, and we look forward to learning from UNESCO how to best preserve those cultural inheritances. We wish to tell the true story of former slaves who repatriated to west Africa and established the first African republic without neglecting to incorporate the rich narrative of the indigenous tribes, with whom they together built the Liberian nation, in spite of diversities in culture and traditions. For this reason, Liberia is co-sponsoring Benin’s resolution on the slave route called “Resistance, Liberty and Heritage”, and this action greatly bolsters our President’s plan to establish a heritage tourism industry.

20.7 Mr President, Liberia is endowed with several untampered historical sites and sites of ecological relevance, and carries nearly 40% of the remaining Upper Guinea forest reserves, providing sustainable support for controlling climate change. The Sapo National Park and the East Nimba Nature Reserves are significant amongst these. Liberia also gives thanks for the FIFA-UNESCO “Football for Schools” programme, with the purpose of creating access to this universal sport unmatched in human history. Football is a unifying tool, promoting positive values and character changes. Liberia remains committed to this mission of sports in youth development, and by virtue of its standing as the oldest African State with a President who is to date the only African Ballon d’Or, we therefore requested to be considered among the 10 countries from Africa for the integration of football in schools.

20.8 Ladies and gentlemen, the vast majority of Liberians believe that peace and stability are foundations for education, health, economic growth, job creation and governance. Liberians have come to know by bitter experience that the absence of peace means poverty, and have vowed, that never again shall they become their own enemy. In response, the Government of Liberia has become overly accommodating of the exercise of peoples’ rights, being cognizant however that the exercise of any such right that could impose a return of an already injured country to its painful history shall not be looked upon with favour. Therefore, the President of Liberia has repeatedly declared Liberia as a welcoming place for honest investment and partnership, and I am privileged to amplify that invitation at this General Conference of UNESCO.

20.9 Finally, Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, we urge you to join us to ensure that the initiatives of the Liberian Government to continue to construct the strongholds of peace, tolerance and the protection of human rights and the climate, which are imperatives of national development are guaranteed through education. We are pleased to inform this 40th session of the General Conference that Liberia will ratify very soon both conventions on TVET and higher education. I am privileged to make that representation. Thank you very much for listening.

21. The President:
Thank you for your Excellency. I now invite His Serene Highness Prince Badr Bin Farhan Al Saud, Minister of Culture of Saudi Arabia.
La chose est de se réjouir de l'élection de votre pays en qualité de Président de l'UNESCO depuis une rencontre et une audience précédentes avec vous.

Ce jour marque une étape clé pour le leadership mondial et la promotion de la paix en Afrique et au développement du continent. Je veux aussi remercier Madame Zohour Naouai, Présidente du Conseil exécutif pour les immenses efforts que vous déployez depuis la dernière Conférence et les résultats obtenus.

Quant à vous, Monsieur Altay Cengizer, Président de la 40e Conférence générale, recevez nos chaleureuses félicitations pour le choix porté sur vous, sur votre personne, pour conduire les travaux.
24.3 Mesdames et Messieurs, comme vous le savez, depuis 2012, mon pays traverse une crise multidimensionnelle à la fois imposée par des forces obscures. La crise s’est soldée dans les domaines de compétence et de notre organisation, par l’hibernation et la somnolence des activités artistiques, culturelles et touristiques, la destruction de majestueux fleurons de notre patrimoine historique, et la dégradation continue de tous les indicateurs de squalarisation. C’est le lieu pour moi, Mesdames et Messieurs, d’adresser à l’UNESCO les remerciements appuyés du Gouvernement et du peuple malien pour sa contribution inestimable à la restauration des biens culturels de la ville sainte de Tombouctou, saccagée en 2012 par les cerbères des temps modernes et dans le cas de la réhabilitation de notre système éducatif.

24.4 Mesdames et Messieurs, depuis l’événement de la crise, les plus hautes autorités de la République du Mali, héritières d’une civilisation millénaire portée par l’humanisme soudano-sahélien, ont opté pour la recherche de la paix par le dialogue. C’est dans ce cadre qu’il faudrait situer la signature en mai ou juin 2015 de l’Accord pour la paix et la réconciliation au Mali issu du processus d’Alger, et celle de l’Accord politique de gouvernement 2019 dont l’axe majeur, qu’est l’organisation de dialogue international inclusif, devra permettre aux Maliens d’installer dans leur pays dans une paix durable très prochainement. Et à propos toujours de paix, la communauté culturelle africaine aura retenu la vision qu’en a Son Excellence Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta, Président de la République. En effet, le coordonnateur pour l’Union africaine des Arts, de la Culture et du Patrimoine disait justement à la biennale du Forum panafricain de la Culture de la paix d’octobre 2019 au Rwanda, et je le cite : « la paix ne peut devenir culture que si les groupes humains renoncent à voir dans la violence un mode normal de résolution des conflits et adoptent des comportements et des attitudes portant à la tolérance, à l’assiette de la diversité et à la pratique du dialogue » ; fin de citation.

24.5 Cette vision rappelle, Mesdames et Messieurs, que le mandat de l’UNESCO relatif à l’avènement de la paix dans notre monde reste pertinent, qu’il est d’une actualité brûlante, en égard à la violence de plus en plus accrue et de plus en plus dévastatrice utilisée par des illuminés à des fins inavouables. Ainsi il paraît clairement que le mandat de l’UNESCO, aux antipodes des visées et des courants d’intolérance, alternative à la terreur qui fait l’actualité, est la meilleure réponse à la confrontation des cultures et au choc des civilisations. Il apparaît tout aussi pertinent poursuivre la mise en œuvre du Programme de prévention contre l’extrémisme violent issu du plan d’action du Secrétariat général de l’ONU y afférent.

24.6 Mesdames et Messieurs, permettez-moi à ce niveau de mon intervention de mettre là l’occasion qui m’est ainsi offerte à profit pour saluer la qualité de la coopération entre mon pays et l’UNESCO, marquée tout au long de ces années par d’importants appuis. Je voudrais mentionner sa plus grande implication dans la recherche de la paix et la cohésion sociale au Mali dans un contexte marqué par le terrorisme. Son appui à travers le Programme de renforcement des capacités en vue du développement de l’éducation et au renforcement de l’inventaire du Patrimoine immatériel et les trésors humains vivants au Mali, son accompagnement pour la mise en place des organes de l’assurance qualité dans l’éducation et aux différents programmes de renforcement des capacités en matière de gestion patrimoniale, son appui à la protection renforcée du Patrimoine culturel malien et au travail de suivi des biens inscrits sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial en péril, et enfin sa participation au Conseil consultatif de coordonnateur pour l’Union africaine des arts, de la culture, et du patrimoine.

24.7 Mesdames et Messieurs, mon pays réitère son intérêt à l’égalité des chances, à l’égalité des genres, à la lutte contre les inégalités, notamment celles subies par les filles et les femmes, à l’accroissement des possibilités d’apprentissage offertes aux migrants, aux réfugiés, et aux personnes déplacées, portées par le grand programme de l’éducation. Il attache un intérêt particulier à la promotion d’une culture scientifique, technologique, et d’innovation du grand programme des sciences exactes et naturelles. Nous soutenons vivement la création des réserves de biosphère transfrontalières, notamment celle du Bafing-Falémé entre la Guinée, le Mali et le Sénégal, et de celui de Gourma entre le Burkina Faso et le Mali.

24.8 Dans le domaine des sciences sociales et humaines, nous appuyons fortement les différents programmes sous la paix, la réconciliation et la consolidation de la cohésion sociale, et au titre de notre programme sur la culture. Notre préoccupation majeure reste la sauvegarde du patrimoine immatériel et matériel dans les zones concernées par les attaques terroristes. Enfin notre pays soutient vivement, Mesdames et Messieurs, le grand programme sur l’information et la communication, la conservation, la protection, et la promotion des patrimoines documentaires des États membres, le programme Mémoire du monde ainsi que le projet de bibliothèque numérique au Mali.

24.9 Enfin, Mesdames et Messieurs, pour terminer, je voudrais réitérer l’engagement du Président de la République du Mali à poursuivre la recherche de la paix par le dialogue et à soutenir l’UNESCO dans ce noble combat pour le triomphe de la paix partout où elle est menacée, et cela en convergence avec l’Union africaine. Je vous remercie.

25. The President: Thank you, your Excellency. The next speaker is His Excellency Mr Moindjé Mohamed Moussa, Minister of National Education of the Comoros.

Mesdames et Messieurs, cette Conférence demeure plus que jamais fundamentale. C’est le lieu emblématique susceptible de susciter une réflexion globale face aux tendances mondiales actuelles, telles que la croissance démographique, la forte augmentation de la jeunesse, la progression des sociétés du savoir, le changement climatique et de l’évolution des inégalités, en sus des conflits souvent politiques et terroristes, qui déchirent l’humanité.

Face à ces défis qui intéressent fortement le programme de l’Agenda 2030 pour le développement durable, l’Union des Comores soutient les réformes entreprises par l’UNESCO, notamment la Transformation stratégique qui permettra également de recadrer la stratégie opérationnelle de la priorité Afrique, ainsi que sa re-conceptualisation. Aussi, de par les valeurs qu’incarne l’UNESCO sur le plan international pour apporter sa contribution aux grandes problématiques mondiales, les réponses que la Communauté internationale attend d’elle, face aux défis actuels sur la jeunesse, la promotion des droits des femmes et leur autonomisation, plus particulièrement dans les zones les plus défavorisées et les petits États insulaires en développement, notamment ceux d’Afrique, doivent être au rendez-vous.

Mesdames et Messieurs, comme vous le savez, le monde est à la croisée des chemins, et l’éducation reste le socle sur lequel repose tout développement. Malheureusement le gap est très important en Afrique, en particulier dans mon pays. Permettez-moi de vous rappeler que la Conférence d’Inchéon a montré que le bilan de l’éducation partout dans le monde révèle que les résultats obtenus ne sont pas toujours au beau fixe malgré des sacrifices consentis et des efforts déployés par les gouvernements et les différents partenaires. C’est dans cette dynamique que l’Union des Comores dispose d’un Plan de transition du secteur de l’éducation (PTSE) 2018-2020, par lequel les orientations stratégiques et les objectifs à atteindre s’inscrivent dans un processus de planification globale de son système éducatif. Il n’en demeure pas moins que nous devons nous concentrer davantage sur l’enseignement supérieur, l’alphabétisation, et la formation technique et professionnelle de qualité. Pour cela, et avec la volonté politique du Président de la République Son Excellence Azali Assoumani de faire des Comores un pays émergent à l’horizon 2030 à travers le Plan Comores émergent (PCE), le Gouvernement de l’Union des Comores a fait de l’éducation la locomotive de cette émergence et a décrété l’année 2020 « Année de l’éducation nationale ». Pour un financement à la hauteur de cette ambition, une Table ronde internationale des bailleurs de fonds pour le développement des Comores se tiendra à Paris du 2 au 3 décembre prochain. Nous invitons toutes les bonnes volontés et les investisseurs à y prendre part avec audace et foi en un avenir meilleur de ce pays. À cet égard, les Comores, petit État insulaire en voie de développement, sollicite la Directrice générale de bien vouloir continuer ses efforts pour garantir à cette catégorie de pays, une éducation inclusive de qualité, notamment aux pays qui sont les plus nécessiteux.

Monsieur le Président, Madame la Directrice générale, honorable assistance, dans le cadre de la culture, l’Union des Comores compte sur le soutien constant de l’UNESCO pour développer et pérenniser des initiatives en faveur de la sauvegarde de son patrimoine culturel, naturel et immatériel, qui caractérise une forte richesse diversifiée.

Dans le même chapitre, l’occasion m’est propice pour saluer le Conseil exécutif qui a voté le 17 octobre dernier la naissance de la Journée mondiale pour le peuple africain et ses descendants à travers le monde. L’Union des Comores tient à remercier les initiateurs de cette noble action, ce projet de résolution porté par le Togo. Le 24 janvier de chaque année devient alors la date passarelle entre les peuples, l’Afrique étant le berceau de l’Humanité, mais surtout le creuset du brassage des peuples divers, de civilisations et de cultures brillantes dont témoigne la diversité culturelle de son continent.

S’agissant des sciences, les Comores soutiennent le développement de l’intelligence artificielle et les technologies qui sont les points clés pour déplacer le plafond de verre. Les sciences ouvertes et le Programme hydrologique international sont manifestement vitaux pour l’humanité. À cet égard, les Comores soutiennent le PHI comme unique organe intergouvernemental du système des Nations unies sur les sciences de l’eau.

Mesdames et Messieurs, l’éducation, la culture, la science ouverte, le changement climatique, la sauvegarde du patrimoine culturel, matériel et immatériel, la lutte contre le terrorisme, la promotion de la culture et de la paix, la gestion durable de l’eau, la protection des océans, les sciences, la promotion des énergies renouvelables, l’intelligence artificielle et la technologie sont toutes des thématiques qui interpellent le monde contemporain et qui restent une réalité qui fonde la légitimité de l’UNESCO. Elles exigent nécessairement une action coordonnée et agissante face au multilatéralisme qui s’impose. La jeunesse et la liberté d’expression des journalistes sont également à promouvoir pour un futur meilleur.

Mesdames et Messieurs, pour renforcer la démocratie naissante sur notre continent africain, la presse doit jouer un rôle prépondérant, elle doit être libre et indépendante. Étant tous conscients que la liberté n’a pas de prix, je voudrais faire appeler à partir de cette tribune et devant vous, faire un vœu sincère de voir demain sur notre continent une presse responsable, qui n’attise pas la haine, dont les sources sont vérifiées d’abord et protégées ensuite. Nous avons besoin de l’UNESCO pour l’avenir d’une Afrique respectée.

Mesdames et Messieurs, pour finir, je voudrais saisir cette auguste assemblée pour vous adresser mes souhaits de plein succès aux travaux de la Conférence générale, et par ailleurs, je souhaite à Madame la Directrice générale mes meilleurs vœux de succès et de réussite à la tête de cette honorable et belle organisation. Je vous remercie.

The President:
Thank you, your Excellency. I now invite His Excellency Ambassador Ihab Fawzy, Assistant Foreign Minister for Multilateral Affairs and International Security at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Egypt.
The President:
Thank you for your Excellency. I now invite Ms Janeil Henry Rose, Secretary General of the National Commission of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to UNESCO.

30.1 Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:
Mr President of the General Conference, Mr Chairperson of the Executive Board, Madam Director-General, Ministers, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines congratulates you Mr President on your election and wishes you every success. As a new non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines reaffirms its commitment to multilateralism and diplomacy for peace to build a better world for future generations.

30.2 Mr President, the mission of UNESCO and its functions must continue in the next 41 C/4 budget period. What are the tools we should develop to find solutions, to resolve inequalities, to bridge the gaps and to deliver for greater impact? The world continues to face growing challenges and the SDGs are the collective platform to integrate the dimensions of sustainable development, economic, social and environmental. A holistic vision towards 2030 and beyond needs to be shaped, taking into account lessons learned and the growing needs of countries in an interconnected world. Using the expertise of the Organization in an efficient manner and ensuring a sustainable financial balance, we can support the delivery of the strategic objectives set out by Member States.
30.3 Our priority is education. The “Futures of Education” initiative launched by UNESCO creates the opportunity to assist in leading the coordination of the implementation of SDG 4 and to reflect on education beyond 2030. As reported, the trends highlighted the need for intensifying efforts to attain these goals. Implementing SDG 4 calls for strong political commitment. UNESCO’s support in policy advice is more pertinent than ever for establishing education public policies to build innovative, resilient and inclusive societies. Exceptional emphasis should be placed on lifelong learning by scaling up youth skills and competences, broadening the contents of education, and diversifying curricula while ensuring quality education. Our Government continues to attach great importance to technical and vocational education and training to improve employability for sustainability of our economy, as well as education for climate change and the use of ICTs.

30.4 Mr President, the climate crisis is certainly wreaking havoc on the social and economic life of Caribbean. The recently-held Caribbean Forum Advocating for SIDS was indeed timely, as it brought into sharp focus a number of-known realities and corresponding proposals for action in relation to the SIDS agenda. It is now patently clear that our response to the SIDS imperatives cannot be business as usual. SIDS must be a global priority for UNESCO. My country, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, recognizes UNESCO’s IOC work on disaster risk reduction, mitigation and adaptation, and tsunami alert systems. The Declaration of SAMOA Pathway adopted at the United Nations General Assembly in October 2019 recommends many United Nations entities to integrate SIDS priorities in their respective strategic and work plans in accordance with their mandates. Regrettably, UNESCO was not included. Nonetheless, we are sure that UNESCO will use these recommendations to update the SIDS Action Plan, ultimately making it more strategic and focused for the next two years.

30.5 We are mindful that budgetary constraints are impacting the delivery of UNESCO’s programmes. We expect that the work undertaken through the structured financing dialogue will reap positive results. Nevertheless, our countries still struggle to access much-needed funding from official development aid (ODA) because we have middle-income country status. We firmly recommend that the criteria which determines that access to ODA is based on GDP per capita be reviewed and changed. We wish to highlight the catalytic role of the National Commissions and UNESCO’s networks in delivering programmes and that the task be given to them for establishing fundraising and partnerships to help bolster the work on the ground.

30.6 Mr President, nothing is permanent except change. Change in life is inevitable so it can neither be avoided nor ignored. Therefore, my country reiterates its conviction that the new structures in the sectors and the new strategy should be driven by the mandate of UNESCO and the needs of Member States, taking into account the outcomes of Pillar 3 of the Strategic Transformation. Mr President, I wish to reiterate Saint Vincent and the Grenadines’ commitment to UNESCO and pledge continued support to achieving its noble mandate. I want to thank you very much.

31. The President:
Thank you, your Excellency. I now invite Dr. Theophilus Mooko, Permanent Secretary of Tertiary Education, Research, Science and Technology of Botswana.

32.1 Botswana:
Mr President of the General Conference, Mr Chairperson of the Executive Board, Madam Director-General, Ministers, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, my delegation and I bring you warm greetings from His Excellency the President Dr Mokgweetsi Eric Keabetswe Masisi and the people of the Republic of Botswana. I wish to assure you of the continued commitment, dedication and strong support of the Government of the Republic of Botswana to the ideals and aspirations of UNESCO. Botswana reiterates its commitment to multilateralism and the rule of law.

32.2 Mr President, Botswana will continue to join other Member States in congratulating you on the election to the Presidency for the 40th session of UNESCO’s General Conference and we wish you success in discharging your roles and responsibilities throughout this General Conference and the next biennium. We also thank your illustrious predecessor for a job well done. Botswana further commends the Director-General and her team of technical experts and professionals for leading the Organization towards a clearly defined transformation strategy. We remain positive that this transformation strategy will ensure that UNESCO continues to play a leading role in its areas of competence and that UNESCO’s programmes shall continue to be of relevance to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

32.3 Mr President, we reach out in solidarity to all of our colleagues who have been adversely affected by natural disasters that hit their countries in 2019. We note with regret that climate change remains one of the greatest challenges that the world is facing today. As such, there is need for UNESCO to show commitment in addressing this global challenge by developing a clear strategy for its mitigation that will form part of the next Medium-Term Strategy for 2022-2029. I am happy to indicate that in an effort to ensure inclusive and equitable education that Botswana has developed a national implementation plan for SDG 4. The approach that the country has taken is geared towards enabling it to transform from a resource-based to a knowledge-based economy. Botswana has also embraced multiple pathways in order to enable learners to pursue different academic paths based on their academic potential and unique needs.

32.4 In response to SDG 4.2, Botswana has introduced reception classes as part of the formal education system. In 2019 alone, over 25,000 learners accessed early childhood development programmes through the reception class dispensation which has been rolled out to 597 primary schools countrywide. We wish to acknowledge the support we received through the Republic of Korea’s “Bridge Africa” project which enabled us to construct a community-learning centre in the disadvantaged community of Mmaothate. The main purpose of this project is to empower local communities to be self-sufficient through education-based initiatives. As a result of this project, 206 disadvantaged learners gained access to education. Botswana was also privileged to participate in the Africa Code Week and acknowledges the assistance from UNESCO and SAP.

32.5 Mr President, Botswana recognizes science, technology and innovation (STI) as critical in the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as well as the promotion of sustainable livelihoods. As such, there is a need for UNESCO to continue building capacities of its members to design effective science policies, including putting more
32.6 In order to focus our attention on increasing access to safe and affordable drinking water for all, Botswana through its national development plan for 2017-2023 has made an effort to translate SDG 6 into national priorities with particular attention to the promotion of efficient water resources utilization and infrastructure development. Botswana appreciates the assistance it has received through the GGRETA Project. Botswana also supports the revision of the statutes of the International Hydrological Programme, including changing the name to the Intergovernmental Hydrological Programme.

32.7 Mr President, the development of renewable energy technologies and the reduction of our global carbon footprint cannot be overemphasized. We urge UNESCO to strengthen the capacities of Member States to build a sustainable energy base that will respond to global energy needs. Botswana notes the importance of intercultural dialogue in building lasting peace and security. We therefore believe that strengthening capacities of Member States in the implementation of UNESCO’s cultural protocols is critical. UNESCO needs to continue to allocate resources, both technical and financial, towards cultural advancements geared towards promoting preservation of cultural heritage. Botswana is continuing to strengthen efforts to promote the use of e-learning platforms. So far, Wi-Fi generating gadgets that are preloaded with educational content have been provided to schools nationwide. In an effort to ensure technical management of these devices, 68 IT graduates have been deployed to schools. Similarly 3,000 teachers have been trained on ICT integration in teaching and learning to fully support UNESCO and its special programme.

32.8 Furthermore, in order to support learning for the visually impaired, textbooks have been converted into audio books and installed in portable listening devices. In this current biennium, five projects from Botswana have received funding through the Participation Programme. In order to strengthen efforts to ensure maximum benefit from UNESCO’s programmes, Botswana submitted a proposal to host the UNESCO Chair on African Heritage Studies. Botswana expresses its appreciation to the Director-General for selecting the University of Botswana to establish the UNESCO Chair on African Heritage Studies. With regard to the UNESCO-Japan Prize on ESD, Botswana is proud that one of its NGOs dealing with the education of people with disabilities is one of the recipients of this year’s prize. This demonstrates our commitment as a nation to provide quality inclusive education to all our citizens.

32.9 Mr President, in conclusion, Botswana joins other Member States in acknowledging the 2020-2021 Draft Programme and Budget as an effective operational plan for the implementation of UNESCO’s Medium-Term Strategy for 2014-2021. We call on UNESCO to continue to ensure adequate funding for Priority Africa which should be evaluated to ensure that commitments are met. We thank you.

33. The President:
Thank you, your Excellency. I now invite His Excellency Mr Makram Queisi, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary and Permanent Delegate of Jordan to UNESCO.
The President: Merci votre Excellence. I now invite His Excellency Mr Kim Dong-gi, Ambassador and Permanent Delegate of the Republic of Korea to UNESCO.

36.1 Republic of Korea: Mr President of the General Conference, Mr Chairperson of the Executive Board, Madam Director-General, Excellencies, distinguished guests, at the outset I wish to congratulate His Excellency Ambassador Ahmet Altay Cengizer on his assumption of the Presidency of the 40th session of the General Conference. I am confident that the 40th session of the General Conference will be a resounding success under his leadership.

36.2 In 1945, in the aftermath of the Second World War, UNESCO was born out of the hope to build world peace through international cooperation in the fields of education, the sciences and culture. The Republic of Korea’s journey with UNESCO started just 11 days before the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950. Today, the Republic of Korea has become a success story of how international cooperation could transform a war-devastated country into a major contributor to the very Organization which helped to rebuild itself.

36.3 Mr President, nowhere is it truer than on the Korean peninsula that the defences of peace should be built in the minds of men and women. The Republic of Korea will continue its endeavour to achieve permanent peace in the peninsula, based on three principles: zero tolerance for war; a mutual security guarantee between the two Koreas; and co-prosperity based on three principles: zero tolerance for war; a mutual security guarantee between the two Koreas; and co-prosperity through international cooperation in the fields of education, the sciences and culture. The Republic of Korea's journey with UNESCO started just 11 days before the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950. Today, the Republic of Korea has become a success story of how international cooperation could transform a war-devastated country into a major contributor to the very Organization which helped to rebuild itself.

36.4 Mr President, concerning documentary heritage, the Republic of Korea strongly supports the original values and purposes of the Memory of the World Programme. We will continue our active participation in working group discussions to ensure that the ongoing comprehensive review will strengthen the freedom of expression and access to information by all. In light of the collective decision-making process long-cherished by this Organization, we hope to find the best mechanism which does not permit a veto power for anyone.

36.5 Mr President, the Republic of Korea believes that UNESCO needs to strengthen its leadership in education, particularly with regard to SDG 4 – Education 2030. We believe that UNESCO has the best expertise to promote the global educational agenda and to pursue the global normative work. We urge UNESCO to redouble efforts to set the strategic priorities, preparing for the future education discourse, while strengthening coordination with other international organizations.

36.6 On natural sciences, the United Nation Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development from 2021 to 2030 will be another watershed moment for ocean protection and management. The Republic of Korea is fully committed to this initiative. In addition, we proposed the establishment of a new category 2 centre, the Global Research and Training Centre for Internationally Designated Areas, for better management of those sites to achieve SDGs.

36.7 On communication, I am pleased to announce that the Republic of Korea will co-host with UNESCO the 2020 Global Media and Information Literacy Conference and Youth Forum in Seoul in October next year. The Republic of Korea has organized international conferences on heritage interpretation every since 2016, seeking for harmonious coexistence of different historical perspectives and interpretations of world heritage. We are also supporting an expert meeting and related thematic study to better understand sites associated with memory of recent conflicts. In this line we proposed to establish a new category 2 centre in Korea, the International Centre for the Interpretation and Presentation of World Heritage Sites.

36.8 Finally, Mr President, I would like to reiterate the Republic of Korea’s support for UNESCO’s continued reform. We hope that the outcome of the ongoing strategic transformation will further strengthen UNESCO’s abilities to implement
the relevant 2030 agenda and SDGs. During the past 70 years of cooperation with UNESCO, Korea has not only benefited from UNESCO’s assistance and expertise in education, sciences and culture, but also from sharing universal values upheld by the Organization. The Republic of Korea will continue to work with UNESCO towards promoting peace based on the moral and intellectual solidarity of humankind. I thank you, Mr President.

Visit of Her Royal Highness Princess Marie of Denmark

37. **The President:**
Thank you Excellency. Ladies and gentlemen, this statement concludes our list of speakers for this morning. And now, we have the distinct honour of welcoming a true friend of UNESCO, a patron of honour of the Danish National Commission, Her Royal Highness Princess Marie of Denmark. Princess Marie is a benefactor and patron of a large number of organizations, institutions and foundations. She is a strong advocate for youth, education, global health, and sustainable development. Her Royal Highness is a patron of international cultural festivals, and ambassador of the University of Southern Denmark. Ten years ago, almost exactly to this day, on 17 November 2009, Princess Marie became a patron of honour of the Danish National Commission of UNESCO. Over the years, she has proven to be a strong supporter and a vocal advocate on behalf of our Organization. Your Royal Highness, we are grateful for your work, and honoured by your presence. May I ask you please to address the General Conference.

38.1 **Sa Majesté la Princesse Marie de Danemark (Danemark) :**

Je vais commencer en français. Madame la Directrice générale, Monsieur le Président de la Conférence générale, Monsieur le Président du Conseil exécutif, Excellences, Mesdames et Messieurs, c’est un grand honneur pour moi aujourd’hui de prendre la parole devant la 40e session de la Conférence générale de l’UNESCO en tant que marraine de la Commission nationale danoise.

38.2 Il y a six ans, je suis venue prononcer un discours à la 37e Conférence générale, et beaucoup de choses se sont passées depuis. Les objectifs de développement durable constituent désormais une étape majeure. Le monde entier a souligné les défis les plus importants pour notre avenir et s’est mis d’accord sur la façon dont nous devrions y répondre. Tout le monde accepte les objectifs de développement durable comme cadre commun du travail qui nous attend. C’est déjà un grand pas en avant.

38.3 Les ODD examinent les défis dans leur ensemble, reconnaissant que les problèmes auxquels nous sommes confrontés dépassent les frontières et les secteurs. Nous avons donc besoin de partenariats mondiaux solides. Personne ne veut être « durable » par lui-même. Relever les défis, un par un, est à la fois insoutenable et impossible. Nous avons maintenant une plateforme pour nous connecter les uns avec les autres, offrant un état d’esprit global et de nouvelles possibilités d’exprimer notre engagement et d’agir.

38.4 Nous constatons un engagement croissant en faveur des ODD au Danemark. Les gens se mobilisent dans de nouvelles formations et s’engagent dans des activités contre le gaspillage alimentaire, les grèves dans les écoles pour le climat, le volontariat, le recyclage, le surcyclage, et la liste continue. Les ODD sont devenus notre récit partagé et notre espoir. Je crois qu’ils affectent réellement notre attitude envers une approche plus inclusive, empathique et axée sur la communauté de chacun d’entre nous.

(Sa Majesté poursuit en anglais)

38.5 Mr President, UNESCO’s core mandates influence many of the SDGs and UNESCO has an important role to play in order to make progress. As patron of the Danish National Commission, I would like to thank UNESCO for its leading role in the coordination of international collaboration to achieve SDG 4 on quality education. I welcome UNESCO’s new framework for education for sustainable development. What does education for sustainable development really mean?

38.6 Many young people are walking on the streets all over the world today and protesting in favour of climate action. They are afraid of the future and I really understand them. The youth wants to be part of the solution, and they will deliver if we can provide them access to quality education. They will need education to develop new skills – green skills. Future generations need education containing both knowledge and skills and an education which allows them to be able to see the challenges in a broader perspective. Moreover, they must be able to point out solutions and take action. In this context, I would like to point out one important challenge: food waste. Food waste is a major problem and a global issue. Personally, I am strongly involved in how we can reduce the amount of wasted food resources. This applies to industry, food stores and private households. How can education help us solve that specific challenge? Too few young people choose vocational education. Let us make these educations green educations! In order to reduce food waste we need a complexity of competences such as science-based knowledge on how to produce, transport and store food in a sustainable way; digital skills in order to control logistics and manage inventory and quantities; cultural skills to make change in attitudes and to reframe the idea of “old” food; innovative skills to create solutions that bring “leftovers” to new consumers or alternate use.

38.7 Vocational education can be a gateway to green industries that actively demonstrate corporate social responsibility. Moreover, advancing green human capital can contribute to a new generation of workers being proud of their job. More than 40 different Member States discussed how vocational education providers and businesses around the world could be motivated to work together to secure the necessary competences needed for a green transition. UNESCO has a global network that offers a strategic step-by-step guide which is designed to help vocational education leaders to improve their understanding and implementation of education for sustainable development. Let us spread the word and get more people onboard.

38.8 Mr President, in a few days young people from all over the world will gather at UNESCO’s 11th Youth Forum. Young people are agents of change and the forum is a fantastic possibility to let the voice of youth be heard. The Danish National Commission for UNESCO actively promotes an approach that recognizes young people as agents who can create change and sustainable development. Good, inclusive learning environments free of bullying and discrimination must be
a fundamental principle. Education that values diversity is important for all countries, because it enables them to build inclusive societies in which differences are appreciated and respected.

38.9 We must work together to ensure that all groups will enjoy the benefits of education by 2030. UNESCO provides us with important data and tools to reach this goal. The next edition of the UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report will focus on inclusion. I believe that promoting a powerful narrative about sustainability in all aspects, including a social dimension; can help education institutions break down gender stereotypes, prejudice and exclusionary practices.

38.10 Comprehensive sexuality education is an essential part of quality education that prepares young people for a fulfilling life in a changing world. Denmark strongly supports human rights education and education in sexual reproductive rights. Sexual education addresses some persistent challenges to education that young people face today, like early and unintended pregnancy, HIV, and child marriage, which influence our chances for expanding learning opportunities. When we promote sexuality education, we are also promoting ways to create safe and inclusive learning environments.

(Your Royal Highness continues in French)

38.11 L’UNESCO s’efforce de promouvoir des valeurs fondamentales telles que l’éducation pour tous, la liberté d’expression, la démocratie, la protection du Patrimoine culturel et l’égalité, afin que ces valeurs façonnent la vie quotidienne de tous. Les défis auxquels la communauté mondiale est confrontée sont de plus en plus complexes. Le changement climatique est l’un des plus grands défis et ne peut être résolu que si les pays du monde entier vont dans la même direction.

38.12 Le label « Ville créative » de l’UNESCO, par exemple, sert de moteur au développement local et soutient le développement urbain durables. Récemment, une deuxième ville danoise a reçu le label « Ville créative » de l’UNESCO et nous sommes très fiers du fait que nous bénéficions maintenant d’une reconnaissance internationale du design et de la culture danoise. L’importance d’être désignée par l’UNESCO pour le tourisme durable, l’identité locale et l’économie locale ne doit pas être sous-estimée. Beaucoup plus de villes devraient prendre part à la communauté unique que le label UNESCO peut fournir.


39. The President:
Thank you very much Your Royal Highness. Ladies and gentlemen, please remain seated while Her Royal Highness is escorted from the room. Distinguished delegates, I now wish to inform you that the delegation of Armenia has asked for the right of reply to the statement made yesterday by Azerbaijan. In accordance with Rule 72 of our Rules of Procedure, I will accord the right of reply for two minutes. Your Excellency, the representative of Armenia, you have the floor.

40. Armenia:
Merci Monsieur le Président. Madame la Directrice générale, Excellences, Mesdames et Messieurs, en réponse au représentant de l’Azerbaïdjan, j’ai tout d’abord à cœur de réaffirmer certaines convictions que nous partageons avec le plus grand nombre. Oui, nous croyons à l’universalité des Droits de l’homme et nous sommes convaincus que leur protection doit s’appliquer à la totalité des êtres humains, et dans le cas du conflit du Haut-Karabakh qui n’a pas encore trouvé de solution, la protection des droits de l’homme, y compris les droits économiques, sociaux et culturels du peuple de l’Artsakh doit être pleinement assurée.

40.2 Ce peuple a le droit de prendre en main son propre destin, de vivre en toute sécurité sur les terres sur lesquelles il a toujours vécu, et de construire un avenir meilleur pour les générations futures. Et ce qui est profondément choquant dans les propos du représentant de l’Azerbaïdjan, c’est l’entendre proclamer haut et fort la négation de l’existence de ce peuple. S’agissant du discours de haine qu’il a évoqué, lorsque les manuels enseignent aux jeunes générations de son pays que les Arméniens sont leurs ennemis, c’est leur inculquer la haine des Arméniens. Et force est malheureusement de constater que cette propagande anti-arménienne est portée par les plus hautes autorités du pays, qui utilisent chaque occasion pour diffuser ces préjugés, y compris à l’UNESCO ou lors d’événements placés sous ses auspices.

40.3 En fait, rien ne sauait mieux illustrer la réalité de mon propos qu’en citant ce passage particulièrement éclairant du rapport sur l’Azerbaïdjan de la Commission européenne contre le racisme et l’intolérance, publié en 2016. Je cite : « les dirigeants politiques, les institutions éducatives et les médias ont continué à utiliser le discours de haine contre les Arméniens. Une génération entière a maintenant grandi à l’écoute de cette rhétorique haineuse ». Fin de citation. Je crois que cela se passe de commentaires. Je vous remercie pour votre attention.

41. The President:
Thank you your Excellency. Ladies and gentlemen, we have thus come to the end of our meeting this morning. The plenary will reconvene this afternoon at 3 p.m. in order to continue with the national statements. I wish you a pleasant lunch. The meeting is now adjourned.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.